(b) The total amount of SCCL pending against all classes of customers for supplies of coal from its collieries, as on 31.3.1998 is Rs. 470.40 crores (including interest for belated payment of Rs. 105.55 crores).

(c) SCCL has been making constant efforts to realise the outstanding dues, also seeking intervension of the State Government for realisation of such dues wherever necessary.

Discussions with WTO on Import/Export measures

2141. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the purport of recent discussions that have taken place with the World Trade Organisation on import regulatory and export promotion measures considered imperative by Government in the national interest;

(b) whether attempts are on the part of the WTO to "frontload" the enforcement of some of the provisions of the Marrak-esh Treaty that, according to the Government's judgement, are postponeable till the final year of the period of adjustment, namely, 2005; and

(c) whether any progress has been achieved to regroup the NAM countries to resist the over bearingness of the WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) During the recently concluded Meeting for India's Trade Policy Review (held during 16-17 April 1998), India, inter-alia, explained the main features of its trade regime, including the trade reglat-ory and promotional measures. India's trading partners appreciated India's continued programme of economic reforms, including trade reforms and welcomed India's positive participation in the WTO.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Government has been in consultation with like-minded countries such as the G-15 and the SAARC Groups, for the purpose of devising appropriate strategies to gain maximum benefits from membership of WTO.

Decline in Exports

2142. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the volume of exports declined gradually after February this year with foreign countries;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the percentage of the country's exports during the corresponding period last year; and

(d) what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Sir, as per the available data after February, 1998, the quantity of exports in respect of commodities like coffee, pulses, rice guergum meal, finished leather, leather footweat components, Dyes/ intermediates and coal tar chemicals and ferro alloys increased, exports of commodities like tea, wheat spices, other cereals, sugar and mollases, sesame and niger seed, groundnuts, shellac, marine products, cotton raw incl. waste, iron ore, inorganic/Organic/Agro Chemicals, Jute and Jute manufactures, Paints/ emamels/Varnishes etc., Aluminium other than products, and Iron and steel Bar/Rod etc., have declined during march of April, 98. As per the provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), the export values registered a growth rate of 2.9% in Dollar terms and 7.2% in Rupee terms during April-Feb., 1997-98 over the corresponding period last year. During April-March, 1997-98 the export values registered a growth rate of 1.5% in Dollar terms and 6.3% in Rupee terms over the corresponding period last year.

(b) Export performance is influenced inter-alia by international market conditions, export competitiveness of domestic

industry, supporting infrastructure, policy framewqrk etc. During 1997-98 exports were affected due to factors such as general slow-down in world trade and especially-the recession in many countries in South East Asia, Japan and Germany; supply side constraints in some sectors, erosion of competitiveness and slow industrial growth.

(c) During April-March, 1996-97 exports registered a growth rate of 5.3% in dollar terms and 11.7% in rupee terms.

(d) Export Promotion Measures are continuously being taken by the Government through changes in policies and procedures for providing an export friendly environment, involvement of State in export promotion and in consultation with trade and industry, The Government is according high priority to exports and all necessary steps are being taken to put exports on a high growth trajectory.

India's Share in Export of Spices

2143. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage share of India in World Trade of Spices; and

(b) the promotional schemes envisaged to increases export of spices?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a)The percentage share of India in world trade of spices in 1997-98 is 48.6% in quantity and 24.2% in value terms.

(b) Apart from the general trade policy reforms, some of the steps taken to enhance export of spices include abolition of cess on export of pepper (except green pepper in brine), cardamom, saffron and spice oils and oleoresins to make them price competitive in the overseas markets; implementation of brand promotion schemes like "Logo Promotion"; grant of "Spice House Certificate" as a recognition of processer/exporter of quality products; setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality; technology transfer; process upgradation and. product development. India's Stand at WTO's Geneva meeting.

2144. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state the details of India's stand on different issues raised in the recently held Geneva meeting of WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House (See below)

Statement

In the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation held in Geneva on 18-20th May, 98, India forcefully articulated its view that existing Agreements arising out of the Uruguay Round should be effective implemented so as to ensure that benefits of the multilateral trading system flow to all countries particularly developing countries like India. It was conveyed in unambiguous terms that trade must be a tool for development in tune with the basic aim of the Uruguay Round negotiations.

India expressed its concern regarding inadequate market access in textiles, problems in the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture, unilateral action by developed countries disregarding GATT provisions, imbalances in the TRIPs Agreement, the proliferation of regional trade arrangements not complementary or consistent with the GATT rules, repeated use of anti-dumping measures and countervailing duties, protectionist non-tafirr measures by certain developed countries and inadequate implementation of Special & Differeential provisions for developing countries, as set out in different WTO Agreements. With regard to Electronic Commerce, India emphasised that the work programme should clearly define the scope of electronic commerce and analyse its implications, with the General Council paying close attention to the issue of transfer of technology relating to electronic commerce so as to ensure that the benefits of